

Message Text

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12

ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 VOE-00 SCA-01 INSE-00

/028 W

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P R 130946Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2034

INFO AMCONSUL UDORN

US MISSION GENEVA 1891

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS BANGKOK 22781

FOR: D/HA/ORM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES: BOAT CASE

REF: STATE 178281

THE NORWEGIAN SHIP "KINGSVILLE" LANDED IN BANGKOK AUG. 7 CARRYING 22 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, 10 OF WHOM ARE UNDER 16 YEARS OF AGE, WHICH THEY HAD RESCUED FROM A 20 FOOT BOAT DRIFTING IN THE GULF OF SIAM. THE POINT OF PICK UP WAS APPROXIMATELY 110 MILES SOUTH OF SAIGON.

WHEN THE REFUGEES WERE PICKED UP THEY HAD ALREADY RUN OUT OF FUEL, FOOD AND WATER. THE SMALL BOAT WAS IN DANGER OF SINKING DUE TO ITS SMALL SIZE AND THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ABOARD. A VERY DISTURBING FACTOR IS THAT FIVE SHIPS HAD ALREADY IGNORED THEIR DISTRESS SIGNALS AND PLEAS FOR HELP, BEFORE THE NORWEGIAN SHIP STOPPED AND TOOK THEM ABOARD.

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THE SMALL BOAT HAD SET OUT FROM BINH TUY ON AUG. 1 WITH PLANS TO

RENDEZVOUZ WITH TWO LARGER ESCAPEE BOATS AT SEA. THEY FAILED TO CONTACT THE LARGER BOATS, BUT DECIDED TO CONTINUE ON IN THE 20 FOOT BOAT RATHER THAN RETURN AND BE CAPTURED. AT FIRST THE RTG REFUSED TO LET THEM LAND, BUT AFTER THE NORWEGIAN EMBASSY PUT UP A MONEY GUARANTEE, AND TOOK INITIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM, THEY LET THE REFUGEES ASHORE. THEY ARE NOW STAYING AT A HOTEL IN BANGKOK AT THE EXPENSE OF THE NORWEGIAN EMBASSY. THE RTG HAS PLACED A 30 DAY TIME LIMITATION ON THEIR STAY IN THAILAND. THEREFORE, UNHCR HAS REQUESTED THAT WE ACT SWIFTLY, SO THEY CAN GIVE THE THAIS SOME ASSURANCES AS TO WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THESE PARTICULAR REFUGEE, IN CASE OTHER BOAT CASES LAND. AFTER AN INITIAL INTERVIEW IT APPEARS LIKE 8 WILL QUALIFY AS CAT II AND THE OTHER 14 AS CAT I. VISAS FALCON AND BIOS IN PROCESS. WHITEHOUSE

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